

Economic Development/Marketing/Grants/CDBG Report

April 2022

Downtown Development News

- The Purchase and Sale Agreement with Wheeler Health for “Parcel 4” has been executed. Wheeler and City staff continue site design and due diligence.
- American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funding for a future parking structure on Centre Square has been tentatively approved by the ARPA Task Force, with final approval possible at the Joint Board meeting April 12.
- ARPA funding has also been secured for Centre Square infrastructure work and for assistance with Brownfield projects.
- There are a few private-sector ARPA grant projects focused in the downtown area expected for approval. These include the significant expansion of one downtown business that will include new employment opportunities. More information to come.
- The Mayor’s Office and ECD staff are working on a new potential housing project at the “Funck” building and “Eagle” buildings at 238 and 222 Main Street.
- ECD staff and Mayor’s Office will discuss options for coordinating development of Centre Square “Parcel 3”
- ECD staff is working with *By Carrier* to fund two infrastructure projects associated with their development: a large retaining wall necessary at the rear of the property near the train tracks and streetscape work on North Main Street.
- Oma’s Pride is working on a Downtown Grant application to apply for remaining funds not utilized from the company’s initial application to relocate its distribution business to Valley Street.
- A monthly update on the J.H. Sessions project will be provided at the April meeting.
- A StartUP Bristol update will be provided at the April meeting for a West End project.
- The Board of Public Works will receive a review/update on the City Hall Parking Structure in April from the City’s contracted engineer.
- Andrew Armstrong is working with a potential first landlord application for the Façade Improvement Program located on School Street in the “West End.” More information to come.

Development outside Downtown

- ECD is working with two manufacturing operations currently located outside Bristol on relocating to Lot #3 of the Southeast Bristol Business Park and a parcel of land located between “ESPN North” and the Southeast Bristol Business Park. More to come very soon.
- City of Bristol staff are working closely with a Licensed Environmental Professional (LEP) to coordinate a competitive bid process and wetlands work for 894 Middle Street. Currently, staff must wait for the LEP to submit an environmental closeout report to U.S. EPA prior to the release of an RFP.

- A sale of the “Nuchies” property to a new owner is imminent. ECD staff expect the new owner to apply for an Economic Development Grant that may be ready for the April meeting.
- Route 6:
 - The Dairy Queen project scheduled for Route 6 continues although the project will be delayed for a period of time.
 - We are speaking with the developer for the former Ruby Tuesday’s property on its effort to bring a new Starbucks and Chipotle restaurant to the site.
 - We continue to communicate with the owner of the large “farm” property directly east of the “Bristol Farms” plaza about interested parties looking to commercially develop the site.

Small Business/Manufacturing Technical Assistance Grants Completed or In Process

- Pizza Italia (formerly Amano’s Pizza) on Wolcott Street.
- L&R Mechanical Services – To assist with the company’s relocation to Broad Street from a nearby community
- The Roasted Bean – To assist with the company’s expansion next door to its original location
- Cost Cutters Franchisee – To assist with the franchises buildout at Bristol Plaza
- Manufacturing Tech Assistance New for 2022: Colonial Spring for Dept. of Defense Certification
- Manufacturing Tech Assistance New for 2022: Metal Finishing Technologies for “ITAR” certification to grow aerospace business
- Manufacturing Tech Assistance New for 2022: Quality Wire for “ITAR” certification to grow aerospace business

“Urban Jobs” Tax Abatement – State Assisted

- Novo Precision will receive the State-sponsored five-year, 80% abatement to assist in its recent purchase of 215 Dolphin Road, bringing the number of properties occupied by Novo to three on Dolphin Road!

Marketing

Marketing and Public Relations Initiatives:

- 1) City Hall departments continue their move to temporary swing spaces – departments that moved in March have settled into the former Webster Bank building at 150 Main Street – all remaining departments will move to the former Courthouse space above the Police Station this month. City Hall is scheduled to close to the public the week of April 18. All City meetings will be held in various locations, be sure to check the City’s website for the location of each meeting. The ECD Board will meet in the City Hall West Meeting Room located at the former Courthouse space beginning in May.
- 2) The 2022 Farmers Market season will open on June 18 and will continue to be in downtown – due to construction on Centre Square the market will be held in the Bristol Health Medical Care Center parking lot for easy parking and access. The market will run every Saturday from 10 am

until 1 pm through Saturday, October 29. Vendor, guest nonprofit and civic organizations, and musical entertainment group applications will be sent out this week with a deadline of mid-May.

- 3) The KindCare Assisted Living facility held a groundbreaking ceremony on March 22, see news articles in Communications.
- 4) PEM completed their ISO 9001:2015 certification process with CONNSTEP with the assistance of the City of Bristol's Manufacturing Technical Assistance Grant program, visit the Bristol All Heart blog for details: <https://bristolallheart.com/heartbeat-blog/>
- 5) As construction of City Place, Wheeler Health and City Hall renovations begin at Centre Square, new downtown parking areas for the public are being developed along with a map for the community to be aware of where they can park to access downtown businesses as well as the Farmers Market and should be finalized by the end of April.
- 6) New Businesses that celebrated openings this past month – see news articles in Communications:
 - 6 Nutrition, located at 862 Farmington Avenue
 - Bristol Pharmacy, located at 194 Main Street (Ribbon Cutting is being planned)
 - Aroma Joe's, located at 1235 Farmington Avenue (Ribbon Cutting is being planned)

Grants Administration

New Grant Applications:

- The Bristol Police Department is applying for a small grant from the Thomaston Savings Bank Foundation to support their summer athletic program for youth at Cambridge Park. The grant is for \$3,500 to cover expenses including tee shirts, water, and incidentals. The police officers donate their time to supervise the program.
- The Bristol Cemetery Commission is applying for a small grant from the Thomaston Savings Bank Foundation to continue its restoration of an iron fence surrounding a gravesite at the Old North Cemetery on Lewis Street. Last year, a grant of \$500 was awarded by TSBF for this purpose, which is estimated to cost \$5,000. The fence was crafted at the Sessions Foundry in the late 1800s.

Upcoming Opportunities:

- The Federal government has announced that \$5 trillion will be allocated for the State of Connecticut via the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA), to be administered through the Councils of Government (COGs). Information is forthcoming and the application period is anticipated in Summer 2022.
- The American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) Task Force has awarded \$250,000 to the ECD that will be used to create a Brownfield Revolving Fund. The purpose of this fund is to assist private developers who are ineligible for remediation grants with clean-up of properties they seek to demolish or rehab.

CDBG Program Highlights

CDBG Year 47: The third quarter of Year 47 is complete.

CDBG Year 48: Fifteen applications for 2022 CDBG funds were received. Two Public Hearings have been held, but further action is awaiting notification of the Year 48 allocation from HUD.

CDBG-CARES Act grants: There is a total of \$103,070.89 unexpended to date, and \$673,659.11 has been expended by recipients of the two rounds of Covid-related CDBG funding. Bristol is ahead of most communities in spending these specially-designated funds.